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Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

Letter dated 6 January 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the texts of the closing statement and of the Kuwait Declaration that were adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-fourth session held in the State of Kuwait, on 21-22 December 2003, under the chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jabar Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would ensure that this letter and its annexes are circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 35, 37, 38, 93 and 156, and of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Mansour Ayyad **Al-Otaibi**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex I to the letter dated 6 January 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait addressed to the Secretary-General

The Kuwait Declaration

Issued by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-fifth session

The Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council, having regard to the lofty purposes, principles and aims of the Charter of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the common ties between the peoples it represents, recognizing the importance and significance of the current phase through which our Gulf Arab region is passing, as well as the rapid political changes it is experiencing and the great challenges they pose, pursuant to the statements, declarations and resolutions issued by the Supreme Council at its previous sessions, the Council, at its twenty-fourth session held in the State of Kuwait on 27 and 28 Shawwal A.H. 1424, corresponding to 21 and 22 December A.D. 2003, reviewed the work done by the Council in various different sectors and conducted an in-depth analysis of all issues and subjects of concern to the States members of the Council and their peoples in the light of developments in the Arab region and in the international arena.

The Supreme Council, expressing its appreciation for the implementation measures taken by the States members in accordance with the Supreme Council's resolutions aimed at promoting and strengthening relations between the States members in a variety of domains with a view to achieving economic integration among them, hereby affirms the following:

1. The importance of adopting the requisite decisions and practical measures to begin implementing the objectives of the comprehensive development strategy adopted by the Supreme Council at its nineteenth session held at Abu Dhabi. The launching of the process of reform and unification of the educational systems of the State members, in accordance with the terms of the document submitted by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Abd al-Aziz Al Sa'ud, Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is perhaps the most important of the GCC's strategic projects and programmes that will strengthen its work and serve the interests and aims of the State and its citizens. There is no doubt that a developed education that stresses technological and scientific progress is a fundamental pillar in providing the Gulf citizen with the practical and technological training needed for participation in comprehensive and sustainable economic and social development in the State members.

2. The Supreme Council, confirming the importance of stable political and security conditions in the Gulf region, regards this as a strategic condition for the realization of sustainable development in all spheres and as serving the interests of States and peoples. It supports all diplomatic and political efforts to achieve security and stability in Iraq, to provide the fraternal Iraqi people with the security, stability and prosperity they long for, and to make Iraq a positive member of the international community whose relations with neighbouring States are based on the principles of international law and the fulfilment of international obligations.

3. The Supreme Council expresses its condemnation, repudiation and rejection of terrorist operations that claim the lives of innocent victims, terrorize peace-loving people and destroy civil installations and institutions. It affirms, once more, that the perpetrators of such acts of terrorism and destruction, which are incompatible with the noble Islamic religion and its lofty principles, are guilty of committing immoral and inhuman acts aimed at destroying society, demolishing its political and social foundations and achieving their illegitimate aspirations and aims.

In this regard, the Supreme Council affirms its support for all measures taken to combat all forms of terrorism, together with drugs and the scourge of money-laundering, and it confirms the determination of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its States members to pursue all means to maintain security, peace and stability in order to safeguard the lives and property of citizens and to defend their accomplishments, in accordance with the principle of the collective security of the States members of the Council.

4. In order to deal equitably with the political and economic powers and blocs that have regional and international influence, the Cooperation Council must keep pace with the rapid events and developments continuously unfolding in the Arab, regional and international arenas and take the appropriate initiatives that will contribute effectively to the strengthening of its role in identifying and shaping the course of events based on a clear and well-defined Gulf position.

5. There is an urgent need to boost the working mechanisms, committees and various bodies of the Cooperation Council, so as to improve its functioning and the speed with which its resolutions and recommendations are implemented.

Success lies with God!

Annex II to the letter dated 6 January 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Closing statement of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its twenty-fourth session

Kuwait-the State of Kuwait

28 Shawwal A.H. 1424 corresponding to 22 December A.D. 2003

In response to the gracious invitation of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, the Supreme Council held its twenty-fourth session at Kuwait, in the State of Kuwait, on Sunday 27 and Monday 28 Shawwal A.H. 1424, corresponding to 21 and 22 December A.D. 2003, under the chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, and in the presence of:

His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al-Maktoum

Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, Prime Minister and Governor of Dubai

His Majesty King Hamad bin Issa bin Salman Al-Khalifa

King of the Kingdom of Bahrain

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud

Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

His Royal Highness Al-Sayyed Fahd bin Mahmood Al Saeed

Deputy Prime Minister for the Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the Sultanate of Oman

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani

Emir of the State of Qatar

His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), also took part in the meeting.

The Council expressed its sincere compliments and warm wishes to His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, President of the State of the United Arab Emirates, on the successful outcome of the surgery he had recently undergone, on his safe return to his country, on his continuing generosity to the people of the United Arab Emirates and on his contribution to the promotion of the blessed process of joint cooperation with his brothers, the leaders of the GCC States.

Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC States expressed their appreciation to their brother His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, for his wise and skilful conduct, during his chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) of the proceedings of the OIC's ninth session and for his effective role in reaching positive decisions that have helped strengthen cooperation among the Islamic States.

The Supreme Council reviewed the achievements scored, since its last session, in the development of cooperation in all fields. In light of the events taking place in the new phase unfolding in the Gulf region and the world, the Council conducted a thorough review of new political and security issues at the local, regional and international levels.

Mindful of the concern shown by the GCC leaders to promote joint cooperation in all fields, the Supreme Council reviewed the follow-up reports and recommendations submitted to it by the Ministerial Council.

In the economic domain, the Supreme Council discussed the process of economic integration between the GCC States members and evaluated the results of the steps that had been taken, as reflected in the reports and recommendations submitted to it by the Ministerial Council, the ministerial committees and the secretariat.

The Council considered a report on progress by the customs union that was launched at the beginning of 2003 and on the steps that had been taken by the Council to overcome the difficulties that the customs union was facing. The Council stressed the need for all the requisite measures to be taken to facilitate the free movement of goods and to remove any obstacles thereto. To that end, the Supreme Council approved the establishment, within the secretariat headquarters, of a customs information centre to link the customs offices of the GCC States electronically and to help meet the requirements of the customs union in that area.

The Supreme Council reviewed the report on the Gulf common market and on the steps taken to implement the programme adopted by the Council at its previous session for the creation of such a market by the end of 2007. It stressed the need for the relevant committees to complete the steps set out in the programme on the establishment of the common market and confirmed the application of the principle of completely equal treatment among the citizens of all GCC States and of the removal of any barriers to the realization of such equality.

The Supreme Council considered the report on the timetable it had adopted at its twenty-second session for the establishment of monetary union and the introduciton of a single currency by the beginning of 2010. It took note of the steps taken by the finance ministers and the governors of financial institutions and central banks to define the economic convergence criteria required for the success of monetary union and to establish a timetable for implementation of the programme.

With a view to supporting the process of economic integration between the GCC States, to meeting the requirements of the customs union and to achieving the purposes of the GCC Charter and the Economic Convention, the Supreme Council adopted a unified "Code" on anti-dumping measures and countermeasures, which will enter into force at the beginning of 2004. The Council furthermore ratified the Charter of the GCC Metrology Organization, establishing a new Gulf metrology organization with its headquarters at Riyadh. Its purpose will be to unify standards and measures in the States members in keeping with the requirements of the customs union, to guarantee the safety and quality of goods entering the markets of GCC States for the sake of their citizens, and to assure ongoing coordination between the existing metrology organizations of each State member.

With regard to cooperation on electricity and water, and with a view to making the best use of water and electricity resources, the Council reaffirmed its

commitment to the application of the electricity and water standards agreed on by the GCC.

Conscious of the importance of using different means of transport to link GCC States to one another in order to facilitate the movement of citizens, enhance communications among them and increase the movement and flow of goods between the GCC States, the Supreme Council charged the Committee of Ministers of Transport and Communications with the preparation of an economic feasibility study on the construction of a railway system linking the GCC States.

With regard to oil, the Supreme Council reaffirmed its desire for stability in the international oil markets and to see a balance struck between supply and demand that would secure appropriate prices for crude oil, serve the interests of producers and consumers, and support the development plans of GCC States. Out of a sense of responsibility towards the international community, the Supreme Council confirmed that, in the event of any emergency adversely affecting the stability of oil markets and global economic growth, it would work to guarantee the availability of oil within the framework of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and in cooperation with non-OPEC producers.

With regard to the strengthening of cooperation between the GCC States and the Yemeni Republic, the Supreme Council considered the report of the secretariat on that subject and once again affirmed its resolve to pursue cooperation and strengthen ties with the Yemeni Republic for the mutual benefit of their respective peoples.

The Supreme Council reviewed recent developments in the economic relations between the GCC States and international economic blocs and took note of the progress made by the negotiations between the GCC States and the European Union on the conclusion of a free trade agreement. It authorized the Ministerial Council to sign the agreements that the GCC will reach with States and international economic blocs.

In accordance with the Supreme Council's resolutions on education and, in particular, the contents of the vision statement presented by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, and recognizing its importance for the overall development of education, the Supreme Council reviewed the progress made towards implementation of the joint plan on the development of public education curricula, together with the views of the Consultative Commission on Education and Scientific Research and the study conducted by the team of experts. In implementation of the resolution on educational objectives that was adopted by the Council at its twenty-third session, the Council decided that the recommendations contained in the study should be adopted and that the necessary measures and practical steps should be taken for their implementation.

The Supreme Council followed up on the joint efforts made by the States members to implement the resolutions on the employment of national workers and on facilitation of their movements between the GCC States. The Council stressed the importance of improving job opportunities for citizens and making it easier for them to move, including by extending insurance coverage and offering equal opportunities for employment in both the public and private sectors.

In the domain of legal cooperation, the Supreme Council ratified the following documents:

- Draft Doha document on a unified law for notaries public in the GCC States;
- Draft reference model for legal and judicial cooperation agreements;
- Draft Abu Dhabi document on a unified law on authentication and equivalence in the GCC States.

As an expression of its commitment to the aims of the United Nations in seeking to maintain international peace and security and of its support for ongoing international efforts to combat terrorism, the Supreme Council endorsed the recommendations made by the foreign, interior and justice ministries encouraging the GCC States to accede to international counter-terrorism conventions.

With regard to military cooperation, the Supreme Council considered and endorsed the outcomes of the twenty-second meeting of their Royal Majesties and Highnesses the ministers of defence and of the second meeting of the Joint Defence Council. It expressed satisfaction with the military cooperation established in various fields and the steps and achievements made in that regard.

In keeping with the Supreme Council's keen desire to strengthen joint security cooperation and coordination to combat terrorism, the Council gave its blessing for the conclusion of the GCC counter-terrorism convention, authorizing their Royal Highnesses and their Excellencies, the ministers for internal affairs, to sign the final text thereof.

With a view to facilitating the movement of citizens between the States members, the Supreme Council endorsed the agreement reached by their Highnesses and their Excellencies the ministers for internal affairs to allow citizens to use their personal identity cards for travel between their States as soon as possible.

The Supreme Council furthermore considered the decision taken by their Highnesses and their Excellencies the ministers for internal affairs on standardizing the information contained in the passports issued by GCC States. The Council welcomed that step as one that would facilitate travel procedures for citizens and further joint cooperation among the GCC States. It decided to refer the matter to the relevant authorities for completion of the requisite technical arrangements.

The Supreme Council reviewed the findings of its Consultative Commission on comprehensive approaches to population issues, which it decided to adopt and to refer to the competent ministerial committees to design suitable programmes for their implementation.

With regard to the subject of women and the economic, social and family role they play, the Supreme Council considered the views put forward by the Consultative Commission and decided to refer them to the bodies with competence for that subject. The Supreme Council also asked the Consultative Commission to study the following new topics:

- Evaluation of the progress achieved by the GCC over the past 23 years;
- The obstacles to trade between the GCC States;
- The role of the private sector in improving communications among GCC citizens.

The Supreme Council reviewed new developments and security incidents occurring at the local, regional and international levels, in the context of the grave

acts of terrorism being perpetrated throughout the contemporary world. It considered their implications for, and impact on, the security and stability of the GCC States in particular and of the region and international community in general. The GCC leaders expressed their strong revulsion and condemnation at the ugly terrorist attacks that had been carried out by certain terrorist elements and cells against residential complexes in Riyadh. The Supreme Council praised the security forces of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their efficiency and competence in foiling the recent attemps to commit terrorist crimes that were discovered in the city of Mecca. Those acts had been targeted at pilgrims and visitors to the Holy Mosque during the blessed month of Ramadan and had been intended to spread fear, chaos and terror among our peace-loving societies and to jeopardize their stability and security. The Supreme Council reaffirmed its full solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its support for all the measures that the Kingdom had taken to safeguard its security and stability. The Council also reiterated its steadfast and unwavering condemnation of all acts and crimes of terrorism in all its forms, regardless of the motives behind them, since they are incompatible with religious laws and with humanitarian and moral values. At the same time, it expressed its support for all international action and cooperation aimed at combating terrorism and cutting off funding therefor.

With regard to the attempts being made in certain media circles to confuse and link terrorism with Islam, the Supreme Council expressed its total rejection of efforts to link terrorism to any religion or civilization. It insisted that Islam and Muslims should not be blamed for acts or practices that had absolutely nothing to do with the noble Islamic religion and were alien to its noble tenets, which espouse coexistence, tolerance, love and non-violence and prohibit the terrorization of peace-loving peoples and attacks on innocent civilians. The Supreme Council stressed the need for the media to refute such claims and to take concerted action against them.

With regard to developments in Iraq and their repercussions at the regional and international levels, the Supreme Council reiterated the fundamentals of its well-known and declared position, namely its sympathy for and full solidarity with the fraternal people of Iraq in their plight caused by the prevailing security situation. The Council rejected any attempt to dismember Iraq and emphasized the need to preserve that country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and to ensure compliance with the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs. It invited the other parties to adopt the same approach. The Council stressed the importance of a vital role for the United Nations in Iraq in order to pave the way for allowing the Iraqi people to determine their own political future as soon as possible.

The Supreme Council expressed satisfaction with the new direction in United States policy aimed at accelerating the handover of power to Iraqis, and welcomed the statement by the interim Iraqi Governing Council on the agreement reached with the coalition authorities to a timetable for the handover of power and authority to the Iraqis by a method that would satisfy the wishes of the Iraqi people. The Supreme Council regards this as a positive step in the right direction, that will allow the Iraqi people to manage their own affairs and to determine their own future, particularly since the programme presented meets Arab and international demands and complies with Security Council resolution 1511 (2003). The Supreme Council hopes that this will help create stability in fraternal Iraq and bring an end to its ordeal.

The Supreme Council expressed its grave concern at the continuation of the difficult security situation and at the human suffering it was causing for the fraternal people of Iraq. In that context, the Supreme Council strongly condemned the terrorist bombings directed against civilians, humanitarian and religious institutions, international organizations and diplomatic missions working in Iraq. It expressed its sincere condolences to the families of the victims of such terrorist acts and its solidarity with their countries in dealing with such crimes.

The Supreme Council called on the occupation authorities in Iraq to bear their responsibilities in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, concerning the responsibilities of occupying forces for the maintenance of peace and stability. The Supreme Council also emphasized the importance of cooperation between Iraq and neighbouring States to prevent the infiltraiton of its borders.

The Supreme Council condemned the deliberate mass killing of Iraqis and of Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees and third country nationals that had been carried out by the former Iraqi regime, as confiremd by the discovery of mass graves. Such killings were a flagrant and gross violation of human rights of Islamic and moral principals and of Arab values.

In that regard, the Supreme Council welcomes the decision taken by the interim Governing Council to set up a special court to try the perpetrators of those crimes.

The Supreme Council expressed its heartfelt condolences to the families of the Iraqis and those of the Kuwaiti detainees and others whose mortal remains have been identified thus far. It also expressed its concern at the continuing suffering of the families of missing persons whose fate had yet to be ascertained.

The Supreme Council applauded the statement made by the President of the Security Council on 18 December 2003 on the report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Kuwaiti prisoners and third country nationals.

The Supreme Council praised the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross and its Tripartite Technical Sub-committee, and appealed to all the parties concerned to continue their joint efforts in order to resolve the outstanding problem related to that issue as soon as possible.

The Supreme Council called on the United Nations to cooperate with the coalition authorities and the relevant Iraqi authorities and to exert every effort to produce a final solution to the problem of returning the assets and national archives of the State of Kuwait that were seized by the former Iraqi regime during its invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

The Supreme Council discussed the occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands, Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which belong to the State of the United Arab Emirates. Recalling and confirming its earlier resolutions in that regard, and having considered the contacts important reciprocal visits undertaken between the State of the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Supreme Council expressed its hope that those contacts and visits would produce positive and tangible results that would help strengthen the relations between the two States, develop cooperation between GCC States and the Islamic Republic of Iran and reinforce security and peace in the region.

The Supreme Council reiterated its steadfast support for the right of the State of the United Arab Emirates to its three islands and to their territorial waters, airspace, continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone, since they are an integral part of the State of the United Arab Emirates.

After a thorough assessment, the Supreme Council again charged the Ministerial Council with consideration of all peaceful means of restoring the right of the State of the United Arab Emirates to its three islands.

The Supreme Council viewed with grave concern the serious deterioration in the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the challenges posed to the Middle East peace process by the insistence of the Israeli Government on pursuing a policy of escalation, attacking and destroying Palestinian towns and villages, making their inhabitants homeless, assassinating their cadres and continuing with the construction of its so-called "Security Fence", which is actually designed to seize more Palestinian land and to abort the road map and the peace process, erecting an obstacle and posing a challenge to all Arab and international peace efforts. In this context, the Supreme Council appeals to the international community to bring pressure to bear on the Israeli Government to bring a halt to its provocative acts and to its threats against Syria and Lebanon.

In that connection, the Supreme Council took note of the speech made by Ariel Sharon indicating the determination of the Israeli Government to take unilateral action to implement its so-called "separation" or "disengagement" plan, thereby rejecting any negotiations with the Palestinian side. The Supreme Council reiterated its strong condemnation of such measures which do not help Arab and international efforts to revive the peace process.

In condemning these provocative and savage practices, the Supreme Council reiterates, once more, that the only way to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East region is to put an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese territories, and to allow the Palestinian people to exercise its right to create an independent State on its national soil, with Al Quds al-Sharif as its capital, in accordance with the terms of the Arab peace initiative and the relevant United Nations resolutions upheld by the peace initiative and the road map.

The Supreme Council welcomed the unanimous adoption, on 19 November 2003, of Security Council resolution 1515 (2003), which had been tabled by the Russian Federation and which endorses the implementation of the road map to a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by the establishment of two States co-existing side by side in security and peace. The resolution emphasizes the importance of achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace for all sides, including Syria and Lebanon.

Renewing the expression of its appreciation for the constructive international efforts and the efforts of the Quartet and of His Excellency President George Bush, the Council again calls on all the parties concerned and on the international community to redouble their efforts to bring pressure to bear on the Israeli Government so that it desists from its aggressive practices against the Palestinian people, halts construction of its so-called "Security Fence" and cooperates seriously and sincerely with the Palestinian Government led by Prime Minister Ahmed Qorei

in order to begin implementing the road map and pushing the peace process forward in the right direction.

The Supreme Council reiterated its call on Israel and the international community to help rid the Middle East region, including the Gulf region, of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council stressed the need for Israel to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to subject all its nuclear facilities to international inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the context of the ongoing concern and efforts of the GCC States to guarantee international peace and security, and conscious of the importance of the role played by the United Nations and of the need to promote its objectives, the Supreme Council welcomed the idea of developing the working mechanisms of the United Nations to enable it to play its vital role more effectively. The Supreme Council hoped that the relevant study would be completed expeditiously.

The Council expressed its deep appreciation and gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, for his earnest and sincere efforts as Chairman of the Supreme Council during its twenty-third session and for the significant achievements he had made in pushing joint GCC cooperation on towards new horizons and greater progress and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

The Supreme Council expressed its deep appreciation and gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait and Chairman of the current session, and to his Government and generous people for the hospitality and the sincere fraternal feelings with which the leaders of the Council had been received. The GCC leaders praised His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Supreme Council's current session, for the care and kind attention he had devoted to that meeting, and for his judicious conduct of proceedings, which had had the greatest impact on the reaching of important decisions and outcomes. The GCC leaders expressed their confidence that, during its chairmanship of the current session, the State of Kuwait, under the leadership of His Highness, would help to advance the blessed process of cooperation and drive it on to new horizons, taking account of prevailing local, regional and international circumstances and aspirations of the peoples of the GCC States.

The Supreme Council looks forward to meeting at its twenty-fifth session which will be held — God willing! — in the Sate of the United Arab Emirates during the month of Dhu`lga`dah A.H. 1425, corresponding to December A.D. 2004, at the kind invitation of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, President of the State of the United Arab Emirates.

Issued at Kuwait
Monday, 28 Shawwal A.H. 1424
Corresponding to 22 December A.D. 2003